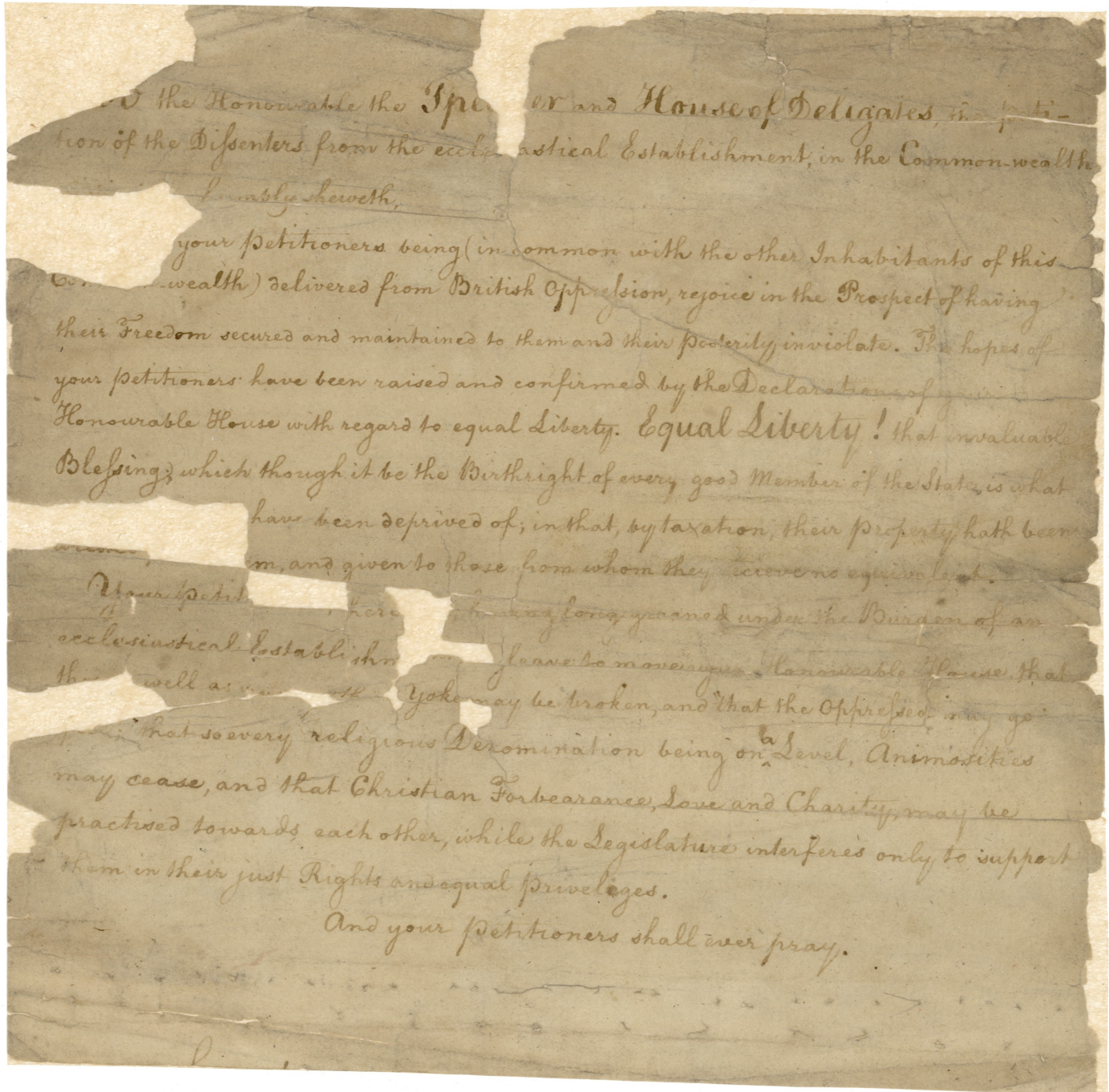


Petition of the 10000 Dissenters for Religious Freedom, 1776



O the Honorable the Speaker and House of Delegates, the petition of the Dissenters from the ecclesiastical Establishment, in the Commonwealth humbly sheweth,

your petitioners being (in common with the other Inhabitants of this Commonwealth) delivered from British Oppression, rejoice in the Prospect of having their Freedom secured and maintained to them and their posterity inviolate. The hopes of your petitioners have been raised and confirmed by the Declaration of your Honorable House with regard to equal Liberty. Equal Liberty! that invaluable Blessing; which though it be the Birthright of every good Member of the State is what have been deprived of; in that, by taxation, their property hath been taken from them, and given to those from whom they receive no equivalent.

Your petitioners, who have long groined under the Burden of an ecclesiastical Establishment, leave to move your Honorable House, that the well as the Yoke may be broken, and that the Oppressed may go free; that so every religious Persecution being on a Level, Animosities may cease, and that Christian Forbearance, Love and Charity, may be practised towards each other, while the Legislature interferes only to support them in their just Rights and equal privileges.

And your petitioners shall ever pray.

Citation: Dissenters Petition, October 16, 1776, Legislative Petitions Digital Collection, Library of Virginia.

Richmond, Va. Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.